



NEWS...

From

Legislator Tom Cilmi

FOR RELEASE: November 3, 2010

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SUFFOLK LEGISLATORS CILMI, D'AMARO AND BARRAGA DERIDE BUDGET PROCESS Call for an End to Omnibus Budget Amendments

Legislators Tom Cilmi (R-Bay Shore), Lou D'Amaro (D-North Babylon) and Tom Barraga (R-West Islip) joined today in filing a bill to limit so-called omnibus budget amendments.

The bill, entitled "A Local Law to Increase Transparency and Accountability in County Budget Process" would require that only those items that seek to "achieve a single purpose" may be combined in one amendment.

Tom Cilmi, the bill's chief sponsor, says there are two major problems with the current process. "First of all, to combine changes on such a wide variety of expense and revenue items into one bill is an affront to taxpayers and unfair to legislators. Second of all, the process leaves very little time to digest the substance of and impact of the hundreds of proposed changes."

"This charter revision is a win-win for advocates of both good government and fiscal responsibility," said Legislator Lou D'Amaro (D-North Babylon) a co-sponsor of the bill. "It will make legislators more accountable for their votes and more likely to side with the interests of Suffolk County's overburdened taxpayers instead of special interests. Transparency in budgeting leads to accountability, which, in turn, leads to responsible spending practices. I applaud Legislator Cilmi for introducing this legislation and I will vociferously advocate for its approval."

Legislator Barraga said, “Each amendment to the budget should be taken up and voted on individually so that every member of the Legislature has a clear understanding of each amendment and casts a vote based on the best interests of his or her constituents.”

Cilmi says, “Every proposed change should stand on its own merit and be subject to public scrutiny. Taxpayers deserve complete transparency; after all, it’s their money we’re spending.”

The bill will go through a public hearing process and could be voted on in December.

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